



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# **Sussex County designates ‘cooling stations’ as extreme heat scorches region**

Summer officially begins in two weeks, but already Sussex County is weathering its second blast of extreme heat this year, as daytime temperatures in the upper 90s – and heat indexes above 100 degrees – will send residents and visitors in search of relief.

To help those in need of heat relief, Sussex County is designating four facilities as “cooling stations” that will be available during this week’s heat wave. Temperatures today and Thursday are expected to approach 100 degrees, with heat index values of 103 degrees on Thursday. Temperatures should slide into the low 90s on Friday before returning to the more seasonable 80s – and the chance for thunderstorms – this weekend.

The air-conditioned facilities available to the public include:

**County Administration Building**  
**2 The Circle**  
**Georgetown, DE**  
7 a.m.-10 p.m. M-F

**Milton Library**  
**121 Union Street**  
**Milton, DE**  
10 a.m.-8 p.m. M-F; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sat.

**South Coastal Library**  
**43 Kent Ave.**  
**Bethany Beach, DE**  
10 a.m.-8 p.m. M-Th; 1-5 p.m. F;  
9 a.m.-3 p.m. Sat

**Greenwood Library**  
**100 Mill Street**  
**Greenwood, DE**  
10 a.m.-8 p.m. M, T, Th, F; 10 a.m.-5 p.m. W;  
10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sat.

Sussex County paramedics will make routine stops at these locations, as time permits, to answer any heat-related questions and/or concerns. Also, free,

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individual servings of bottled water will be available at the County Administration Building ONLY.

When visiting a relief station, please bring any medications and/or specialty items that you need.

Residents and visitors are urged to limit exposure outside, particularly during the hottest part of the day – roughly from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m. Those who must be outside should take frequent breaks, and drink plenty of water.

“High body temperatures and dehydration will make other medical conditions such as heart and breathing problems much worse,” said Sussex County Emergency Medical Services Director Robert Stuart. “It is very important to stay cool and hydrated when the heat index reaches these dangerous levels.”

Here are some hot weather safety tips:

- Wear lightweight and light-colored clothing. Lighter clothing deflects sunlight, and will not absorb heat like dark materials do;
- Stay in properly ventilated areas;
- Avoid strenuous activity during the hottest part of the day;
- Have plenty of water available. Avoid alcoholic beverages;
- Be aware of the signs of heat cramps, heat exhaustion or heat stroke, and seek medical attention if necessary. Signs of heat cramps can include muscular pains and spasms from heavy exertion. Resting in a cooler area, taking occasional sips of water and stretching the muscle mildly can counter the effects of heat cramps. Heat exhaustion and heat stroke are much more serious, and may require immediate medical attention. Symptoms of heat exhaustion can include a pale or flushed appearance, as well as headache and nausea. Heat stroke symptoms include rapidly increased body temperature, loss of consciousness, rapid or weak pulse and rapid, shallow breathing.

Be sure to check on friends, relatives and neighbors, particularly the elderly and young children, who may be at risk for exposure to the heat. Remember to give pets extra water, provide shade or bring them into a residence where temperatures are cooler.

It is also important to keep in mind that due to the higher temperatures and humidity expected in the area over the next couple of days, demand for electricity will increase. In an effort to reduce costs and avoid power shortages, the Sussex County Emergency Operations Center asks all residents and business operators in Sussex County to help conserve power to avoid outages.

You can help in the conservation of electricity by taking the following steps:

- Set air conditioners to 80 degrees, or use fans instead, and minimize the opening of refrigerators and freezers;
- Limit the use of electric water heaters and turn off non-essential appliances and lights;
- Delay using high-energy appliances, such as washing machines and dryers, until after 8 p.m.;
- Prepare light summer meals that require minimal, if any, cooking. Try using an outdoor grill or microwave oven instead of an electric range;
- Keep window shades, blinds, or drapes closed to block the sunlight during the hottest portion of the day;
- Move lamps, TVs and other heat sources away from air conditioner thermostats. Heat from those appliances is sensed by the thermostat and could cause an air conditioner to run longer than necessary;
- Move furniture and other obstacles from in front of central air conditioning ducts to allow cooler air to circulate through rooms more freely.

Businesses can conserve electricity by:

- Raising thermostats;
- Turning off unnecessary lighting and equipment.

The Sussex County EOC and Sussex County EMS will continue to monitor the weather situation and issue updates as needed. For more information, please call (302) 855-7801 [EOC] or (302) 854-5050 [EMS].

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